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THE NEW AVENGERS®
ILLUMINATI™

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THE NEW AVENGERS
ILLUMINATI

The Illuminati is a secret organization comprised of several of the world's most powerful heroes: Sorcerer Supreme Doctor Strange; Black Bolt, King of the Inhumans; Charles Xavier, founder of the X-Men and mutant rights activist; Reed Richards, founding member of the Fantastic Four; Namor, the Sub-Mariner, Ruler of Atlantis; and Iron Man, founding member of the Avengers.

These six men have worked together to shape the superhuman world. To keep the trust between the group members, the Illuminati's existence has been kept secret from everyone, including the members' teammates and families.

What they've done together has remained a mystery...until now...

Years ago, a mysterious entity known as the Beyonder picked up heroes and villains from Earth and pitted them against each other on the faraway Battleworld in order to better understand human emotion. Those who were taken banded together and escaped the Battleworld, leaving the Beyonder alone...

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I AM FROM BEYOND!
"I WASN'T SURE WHAT IT WAS.
"I'D NEVER FELT ANYTHING LIKE IT BEFORE.
SLAY YOUR ENEMIES AND ALL YOU DESIRE SHALL BE YOURS!
"THIS BEYONDER...
"HE HAD CONSTRUCTED A PLACE CALLED 'BATTLEWORLD' AND POPULATED IT WITH THIRTY-SEVEN MEN AND WOMEN FROM THE PLANET EARTH.
"THEN TOLD US TO FIGHT TO THE DEATH.
NOTHING YOU DREAM OF IS IMPOSSIBLE FOR ME TO ACCOMPLISH!

"I COULD HAVE STOPPED IT.

"ONE PSYCHIC COMMAND AND I COULD HAVE MADE EVERY *ONE* OF THEM GO TO SLEEP.

"THEN REED RICHARDS AND I COULD SORT IT ALL OUT AND FIND A WAY HOME.

"BUT IF THIS BEYONDER HAD THE POWER TO *GATHER US*...

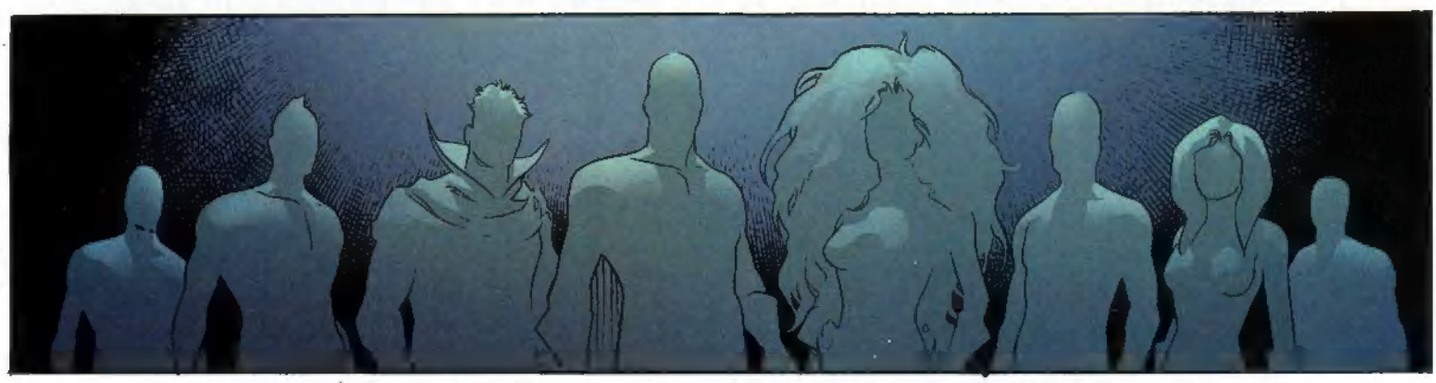
"...I HAD TO ASSUME IT HAD THE POWER TO *RETALIATE* IF I INTERFERED.

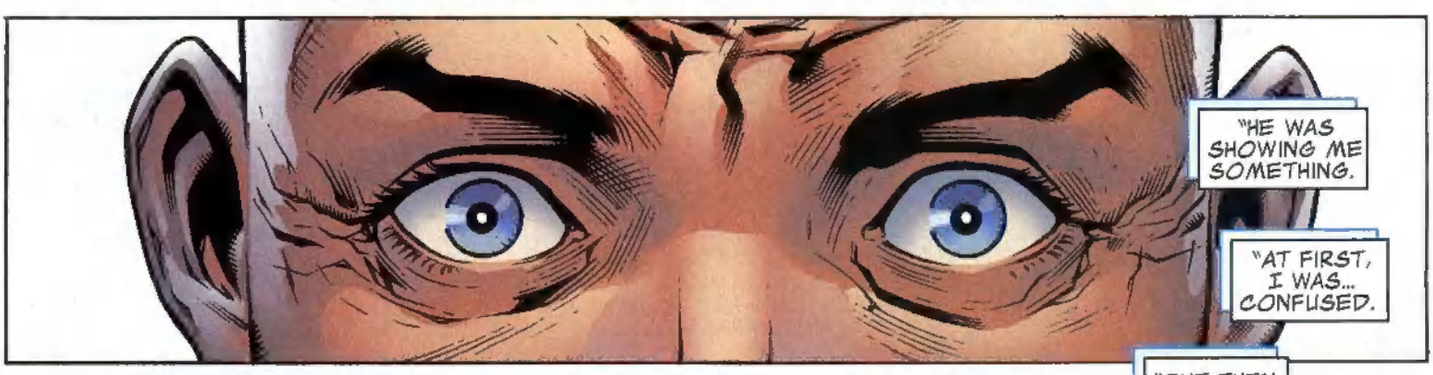
"FOR ALL I KNEW, IT MIGHT WELL HAVE WIPED OUT THE HUMAN RACE IN A FIT OF TANTRUM.

"THEN I FELT SOMETHING ELSE.
"SOMETHING--SOMETHING ALMOST *MUTANT* IN NATURE.

"SO I REACHED OUT.
"I ATTEMPTED TO TOUCH THE BEYONDER'S MIND AND--AND IT SWALLOWED ME.
"BEFORE I COULD--THIS IS DIFFICULT TO DESCRIBE, BUT BEFORE I COULD EVEN COMPREHEND WHAT WAS HAPPENING, THE BEYONDER HAD *PULLED* ME INSIDE ITS CONSCIOUSNESS.
"(I DON'T KNOW HOW ELSE TO EXPLAIN IT.)

"IT--THIS WAS *NOT* THE GALACTIC ENTITY IT WAS PRESENTING ITSELF TO BE.
"NO.
"IT--*HE* WAS SOMETHING ELSE.
"SOMETHING... LESS.
WHO *ARE* YOU?




"HE WAS SHOWING ME SOMETHING.
"AT FIRST, I WAS... CONFUSED.
"BUT THEN I KNEW...
"I KNEW EXACTLY WHAT I WAS SEEING..."

THE BEYONDER IS AN INHUMAN.
REALLY?
BUT NOT ONLY WAS THE BEYONDER AN INHUMAN, I BELIEVE HE WAS ALSO A MUTANT.
ATTILAN, HIDDEN CITY OF THE INHUMANS. BLUE AREA OF THE MOON.
A MUTANT INHUMAN.
SO IT MUST BE SURMISED THAT--
HE HAD A GENETIC ANOMALY BEFORE HE ENTERED THE TERRIGEN MISTS.
THE MISTS THAT GIVE THE INHUMANS THEIR INHUMAN ABILITIES.
AND WHEN HE WENT IN, THE RESULT WAS...
UNTHINKABLE.
UNPRECEDENTED.
CAN AN INHUMAN BE A MUTANT?
I AM SAYING YES.
BLACK BOLT
KING OF THE INHUMANS.

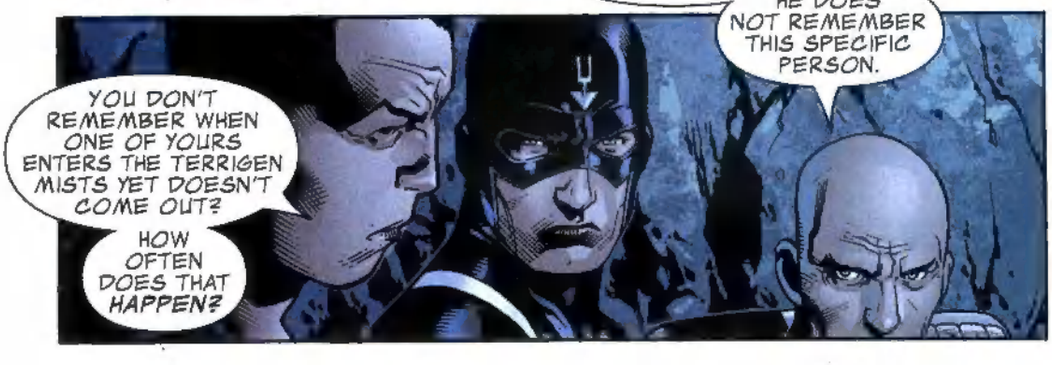
NAMOR
RULER OF ATLANTIS.
OKAY, BUT AT THIS POINT...
...WHY CALL A MEETING?

PROFESSOR CHARLES XAVIER
LEADER OF THE UNCANNY X-MEN.
BECAUSE, FOR THE LAST SEVERAL DAYS, I HAVE BEEN FEELING A...
("PRESENCE" IS TOO STRONG A WORD.)
BUT HE IS NEAR.
AGAIN.

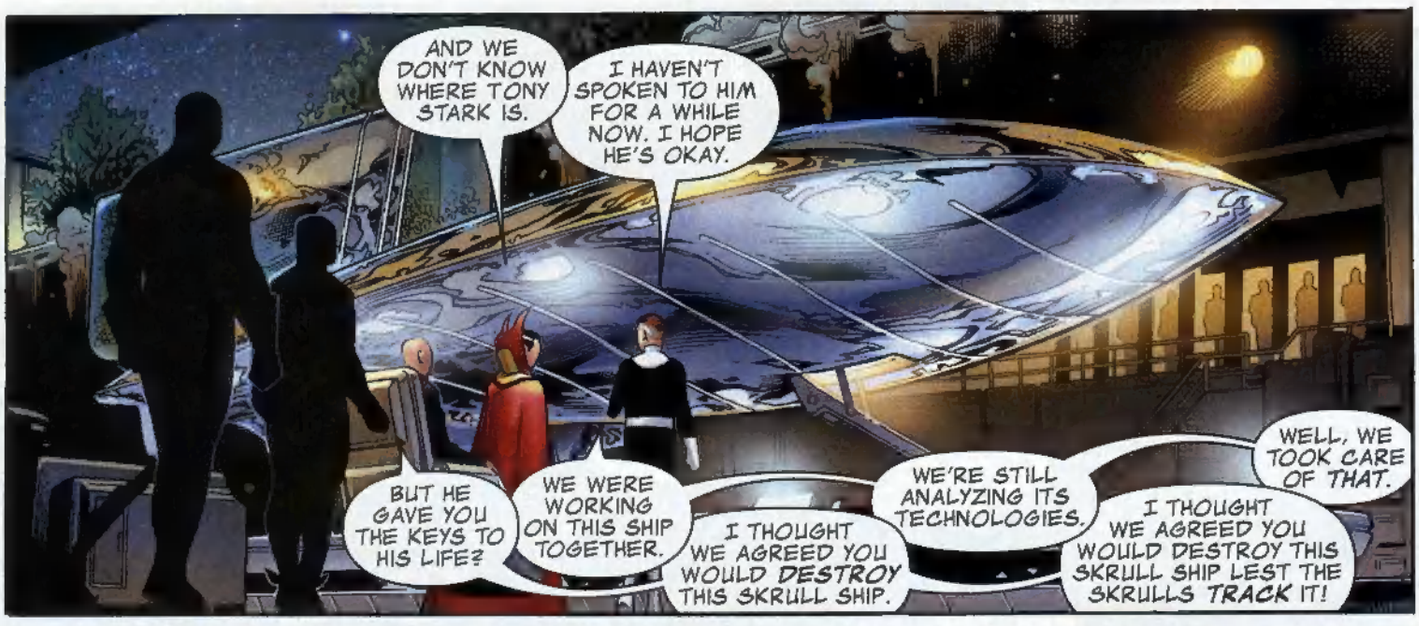
AND I THINK WE, AS A GROUP, SHOULD ATTEMPT TO HANDLE THIS QUICKLY AND QUIETLY.
BEFORE HE GETS TO US, WE SHOULD GO TO HIM.

MR. FANTASTIC
LEADER OF THE FANTASTIC FOUR.
BUT I'VE HAD THE BAXTER BUILDING'S INTERDIMENSIONAL SENSORS ON THE LOOKOUT FOR THE BEYONDER EVER SINCE THE BATTLEWORLD IDIOCY.
BE THAT AS IT MAY...

DOCTOR STRANGE
MASTER OF THE MYSTIC ARTS.
BLACK BOLT, DO YOU KNOW WHO HE IS?
BLACK BOLT SAYS HE HAS THOUSANDS UNDER HIS RULE.
HE DOES NOT REMEMBER THIS SPECIFIC PERSON.


YOU DON'T REMEMBER WHEN ONE OF YOURS ENTERS THE TERRIGEN MISTS YET DOESN'T COME OUT?
HOW OFTEN DOES THAT HAPPEN?

FINE.
XAVIER, CAN YOU POINT US *TOWARDS* THIS GIGANTIC PAIN?
YES.
THAT'S WHY WE'RE HERE.
USING CEREBRO, I HAVE TRACED THE BEYONDER TO A PLANETOID NAMED CERES, LOCATED IN THIS SOLAR SYSTEM'S ASTEROID BELT.
BUT *WHAT* WILL WE DO WHEN WE GET THERE?
AGAINST THIS THING THAT DEFIES ALL TIME AND SPACE AND PHYSICS AND--?
EXACTLY.
WHAT *ARE* WE SUPPOSED TO *DO* AGAINST *SOMETHING* LIKE THAT?
WE WILL DO NOTHING.
HE WILL BOW DOWN AND PRAY FORGIVENESS FROM HIS KING.


AND WE DON'T KNOW WHERE TONY STARK IS.
I HAVEN'T SPOKEN TO HIM FOR A WHILE NOW. I HOPE HE'S OKAY.
BUT HE GAVE YOU THE KEYS TO HIS LIFE?
WE WERE WORKING ON THIS SHIP TOGETHER.
I THOUGHT WE AGREED YOU WOULD DESTROY THIS SKRULL SHIP.
WE'RE STILL ANALYZING ITS TECHNOLOGIES.
I THOUGHT WE AGREED YOU WOULD DESTROY THIS SKRULL SHIP LEST THE SKRULLS TRACK IT!
WELL, WE TOOK CARE OF THAT.

THE TWO OF YOU ARE MAKING A FORTUNE OFF THE THINGS YOU'RE STEALING FROM THIS TECHNOLOGY. AREN'T YOU?
SHALL WE?
WE'RE WORKING FOR A BETTER TOMORROW, TODAY.

SEVERAL HOURS LATER...
SUE IS GOING TO KILL ME.
WE'RE COMING UP ON THE ASTEROID BELT.
PROFESSOR?

YES. THE CLOSER WE GET...
DOCTOR STRANGE? ARE YOU OKAY?
NO. SOMETHING... SOMETHING UNNATURAL...

SEAT BELTS.

BY THE VISHANTI...
THAT'S CERES, BUT...
THAT IS ONE WAY TO SAY IT.

WELL...

THERE'S THE ENTIRE ISLAND OF MANHATTAN IN THE MIDDLE OF AN *ASTEROID* BELT.

THE BEYONDER IS DOWN THERE.

GO TO THE BAXTER BUILDING.

I'M GOING TO LAND BEFORE HE LANDS *US.*

GOOD CALL. AERIAL RECON.

THE ATMOSPHERIC CONDITION'S IDENTICAL TO OUR NEW YORK--DOWN TO THE EXACT POLLUTION INDEX.

AMAZING.

THESE SENSATIONS--THE NATURAL ORDER IS BEING VIOLENTLY DISTURBED--

RICHARDS, HAVE YOU EVER SEEN *ANYTHING* LIKE THIS BEFORE??

NO ONE HAS EVER SEEN ANYTHING LIKE THIS BEFORE.

WE SHOULD GO DOWN TO THE STREET AND TALK TO SOME OF THESE PEOPLE. FIND OUT WHY--

I SEE PEOPLE ON THE STREET.

THERE *ARE* NO PEOPLE HERE.

THOSE ARE NOT PEOPLE. THEY HAVE NO MINDS. THEY ARE...EMPTY VESSELS.

THERE IS NO LIFE AURA HERE. NONE.

ROBOTS?

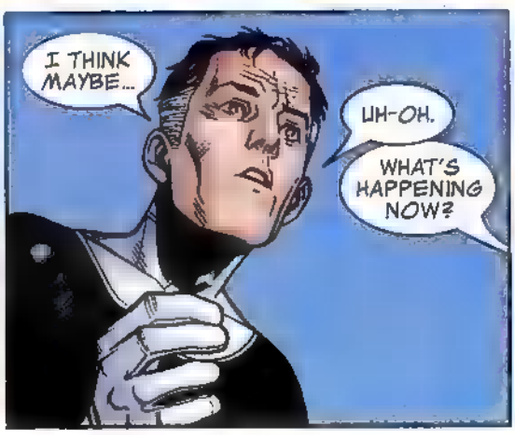
DO YOU SEE THAT?

NO.

"CHARLES, IS THAT HIM?"
"I BELIEVE SO. YES."

THE ENERGIES HERE ARE ALL WRONG.
HE GAVE HIMSELF HUMAN FORM?
WHERE ARE WE LOOKING?
CHARLES, YOU'RE SAYING THESE PEOPLE AREN'T REAL? THAT IS NOT LUKE CAGE AND DANNY RAND?
I DON'T KNOW WHAT IT IS. BUT IT'S NOT HUMAN AND IT HAS NO MIND.
HE'S ARGUING WITH THEM.

HE'S CREATED PEOPLE TO PLAY WITH.
HE'S CREATED AN ENTIRE PLAYGROUND.

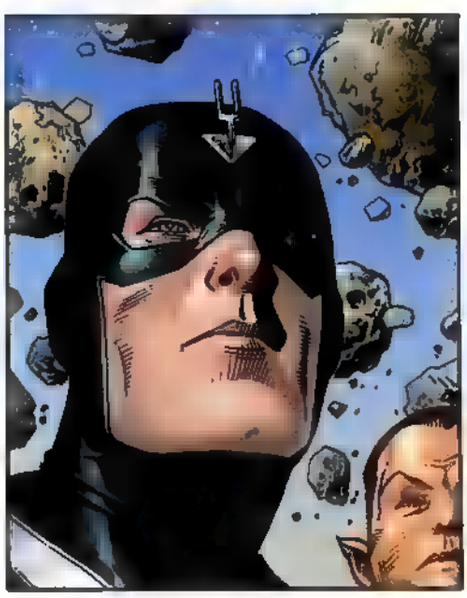

I THINK MAYBE...
UH-OH.
WHAT'S HAPPENING NOW?

"I THINK HE--"

--SEES US.

MOLECULES.
YOU--YOU HAVE YOUR OWN MOLECULES? HOW IS THAT POSSIBLE?

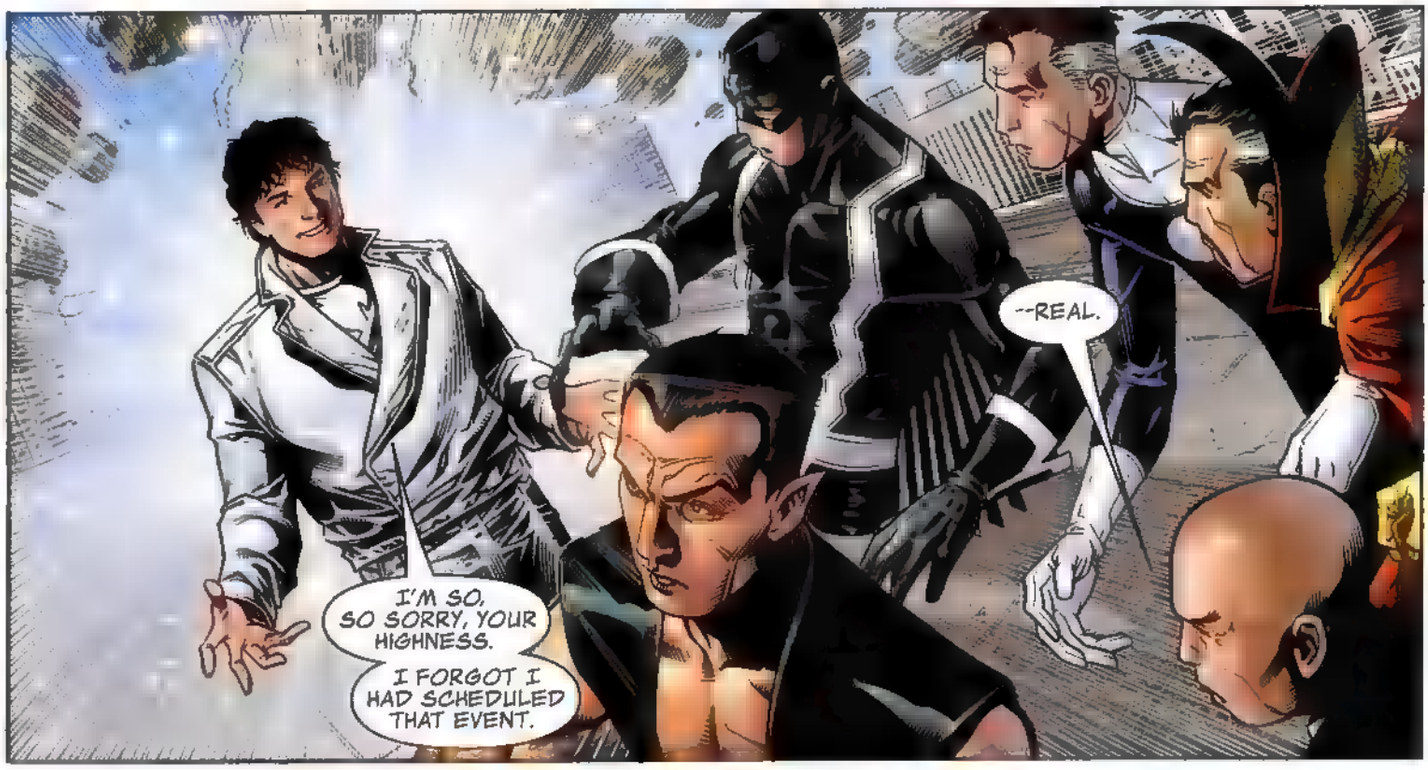
EVERYONE JUST TAKE IT EASY--
DID I-- WAIT--DID I PUT YOU HERE?
DID I SURPRISE MYSELF AND MAKE MYSELF FORGET I SURPRISED MYSELF?



OH--

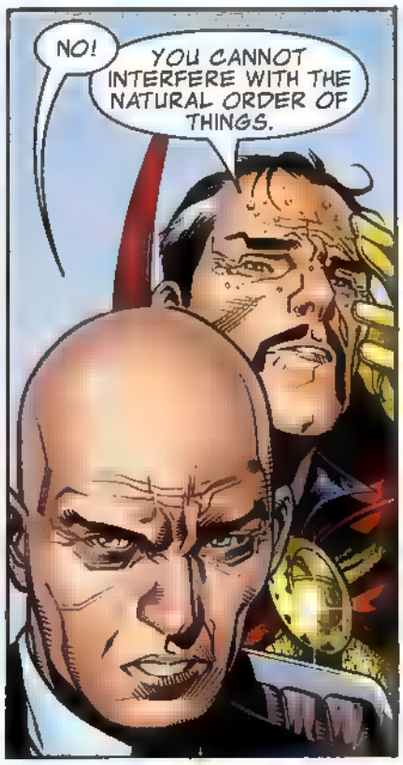
LORD BOLTAGON...
UM, WE HAVE A--

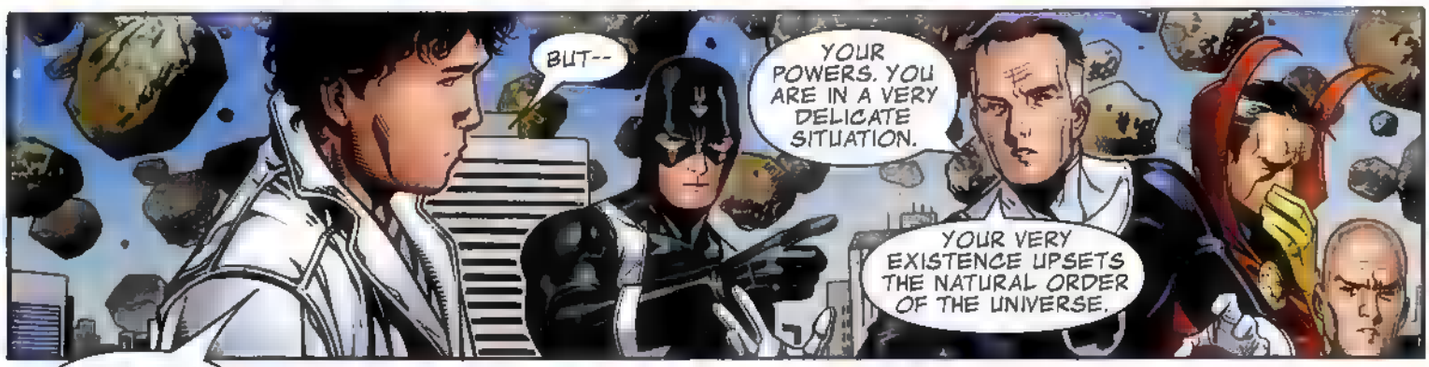
BY THE HOARY HOSTS--!
RICHARDS?!
I'M OKAY!
KABOOOM
DON'T! DON'T DO ANYTHING!
BUT-- IT'S NOT--


I'M SO, SO SORRY, YOUR HIGHNESS.
I FORGOT I HAD SCHEDULED THAT EVENT.
--REAL.

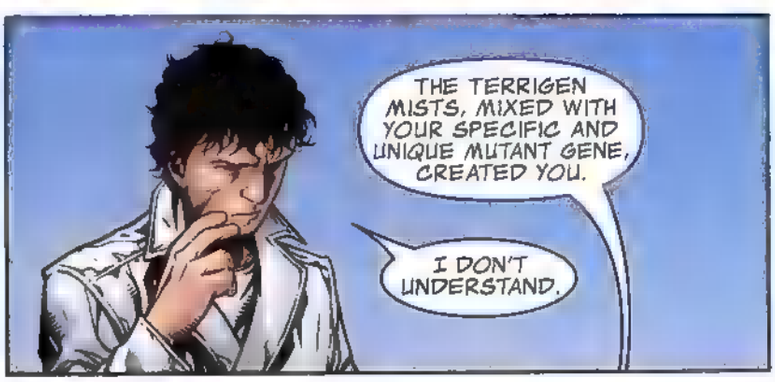
I'M JUST DYING TO KNOW, M'LORD. WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?
DID YOU COME HERE JUST TO SEE ME?
PLEASE, YOUR HIGHNESS, YOU MAY SPEAK HERE.

YOUR LEGENDARY VOICE CAN'T HURT ANYTHING HERE. I TOOK CARE OF IT. PLEASE, IT'S MY GIFT TO YOU.
DON'T--
NO, IT'S OKAY.
IF YOU'D LIKE, M'LORD, I CAN MAKE IT SO YOU CAN CONTROL THE LEVELS OF YOUR VOICE--OR IF YOU WANT, I CAN REMOVE THEM--


NO!
YOU CANNOT INTERFERE WITH THE NATURAL ORDER OF THINGS.

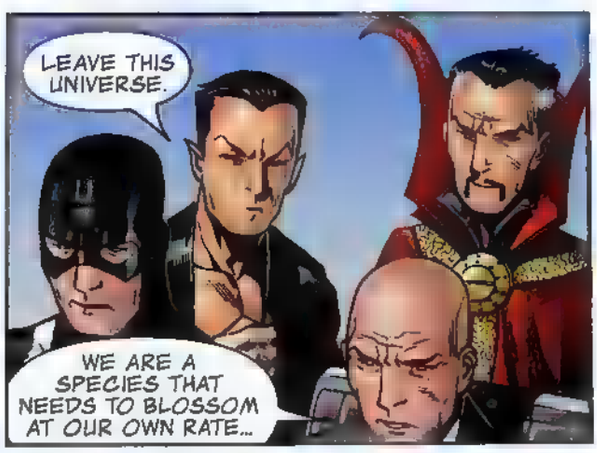

BUT--
YOUR POWERS. YOU ARE IN A VERY DELICATE SITUATION.
YOUR VERY EXISTENCE UPSETS THE NATURAL ORDER OF THE UNIVERSE.

BUT--BUT I'M PART OF THE UNIVERSE'S NATURAL ORDER.
THE UNIVERSE CREATED ME JUST AS IT CREATED YOU.
THAT'S NOT TRUE.


THE TERRIGEN MISTS, MIXED WITH YOUR SPECIFIC AND UNIQUE MUTANT GENE, CREATED YOU.
I DON'T UNDERSTAND.

THESE THINGS YOU DO. THIS PLACE YOU HAVE MADE. THIS IS NOT RIGHT. IT'S UNNATURAL.

MY LORD--
I MUST KNOW--HOW IS IT THAT YOU ARE STILL ALIVE AFTER ALL THIS TIME?
ALL THIS TIME?
HOW MUCH TIME DO YOU THINK HAS PASSED SINCE YOU LAST SAW YOUR KING?


LEAVE THIS UNIVERSE.
WE ARE A SPECIES THAT NEEDS TO BLOSSOM AT OUR OWN RATE...

...WITHOUT ANY INTERFERENCE.
BUT YOU INTERFERE.

IT'S OUR SPECIES.

I JUST WANT TO DO GOOD.
LIKE YOU. I CAN HEAR IT INSIDE YOU.
I HAVE THAT INSIDE ME TOO! I CAN HEAR IT. I CAN DO WHAT YOU DO!
I CAN MAKE THE WORLD THE WAY YOU WANT IT!

NO!
I AM FROM BEYOND!
ALL YOU DESIRE SHALL BE YOURS!

NOTHING YOU DREAM OF IS IMPOSSIBLE FOR ME TO ACCOMPLISH!

CAN YOU HEAR IT?

KING NAMOR!

WE ARE HERE TO TAKE THE SURFACE WORLD IN YOUR NAME, KING NAMOR!!

STOP THIS MADNESS, RIGHT NOW!

I CAN!

EVERYTHING YOU WANT, I CAN PROVIDE.

STOP!

I CAN SAY TO MY KING, "LOOK WHAT I HAVE DONE FOR YOU."

AND THIS-- THIS IS JUST TO SHOW YOU WHAT I CAN DO TO THE ENTIRE WORLD!

STOP IT!

I'LL COME TO YOU WITH ALL THAT YOU COULD EVER--

STOP!

YOUR KING DEMANDS IT!!

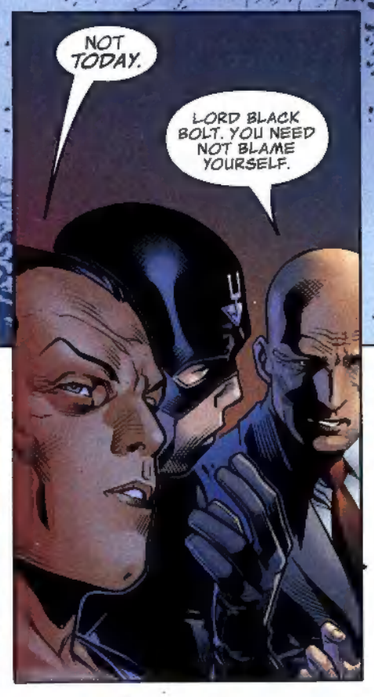
YOU ARE NOT A GOD! YOU ARE NOT AN IMMORTAL!
YOU ARE THE ROYAL SUBJECT OF A KING, AND YOUR KING DEMANDS THAT YOU STOP THIS MADNESS NOW!!
ALL OF IT!
YOU WILL STOP THIS, YOU WILL LEAVE THIS UNIVERSE AND YOU WILL NOT COME BACK!
I WAS JUST TRYING TO--
SILENCE!!
YOU WILL OBEY YOUR KING.

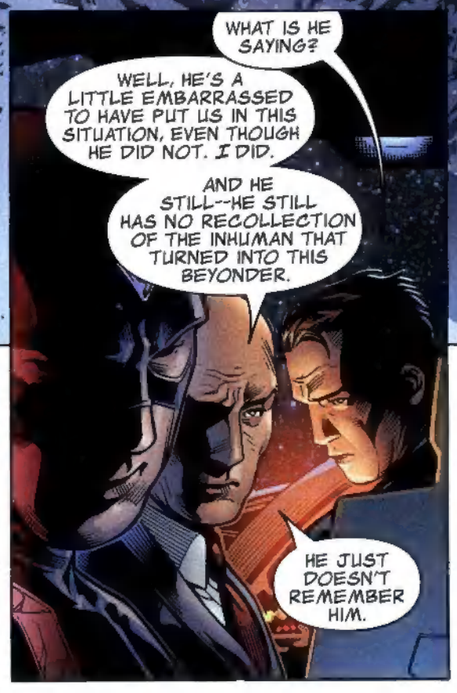
UM...
THOSE ASTEROIDS SEEM TO BE GETTING CLOSER.
I BELIEVE IT'S TIME TO GO.
I WOULD AGREE.

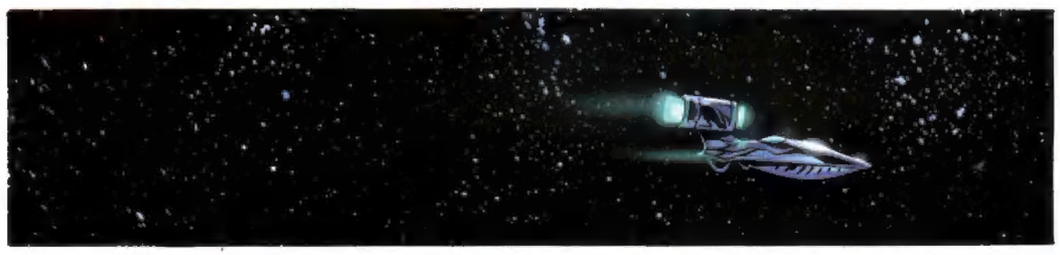
I'M NOT FEELING HIS PRESENCE ANYMORE.
THE ENERGIES. THE NATURAL ORDER OF THINGS HAS RETURNED.
THAT SHOULD NOT HAVE WORKED.
HE WAS FRAGILE... INFANTILE...
AND QUITE AN %^$#ING IDIOT.

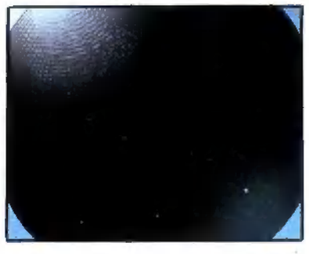
HE COULD HAVE AS EASILY MADE US DISAPPEAR.
I HATE DEALING WITH THESE ALL-POWERFUL, ALL-DOING, ALL-SEEING... THINGS!
AS DO I.
THERE ARE THOSE WHO BELIEVE THAT WE ARE JUST PASSING THROUGH TIME AND SPACE THAT WAS CREATED BY OTHERS, FOR OTHERS.

AND WHAT'S WITH YOUR ATLANTIS SURFACE-WORLD INVASION FANTASY?
YOU STILL WANT TO CONQUER THE SURFACE WORLD?
ONLY SOMETIMES.


NOT TODAY.
LORD BLACK BOLT. YOU NEED NOT BLAME YOURSELF.


WHAT IS HE SAYING?
WELL, HE'S A LITTLE EMBARRASSED TO HAVE PUT US IN THIS SITUATION, EVEN THOUGH HE DID NOT. I DID.
AND HE STILL--HE STILL HAS NO RECOLLECTION OF THE INHUMAN THAT TURNED INTO THIS BEYONDER.
HE JUST DOESN'T REMEMBER HIM.





NOW... WHAT WAS I DOING?
OH, YES. THE WORLD.
ZELDA
NEXT: MARVEL BOY!